

IC-75-1476

19 May 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Product Review Division

SUBJECT : Recommendations to Insure Timely Warnings  
to Mariners

STAT REFERENCE :  Memo to D/DCI/IC,  
Ser IC-75-1473, of 15 May 75

1. The referenced memorandum points out that warnings to mariners of possible hostile acts in any ocean area is a joint responsibility of the Hydrographic Center's Navigation Information Branch; State's Office of Maritime Affairs; and the Ocean Affairs Branch in the CNO's Pol-Mil Division.

2. In the case of the MAYAGUEZ affair, none of the above offices were apprised of Cambodian actions in the Gulf of Thailand prior to the actual seizure of the U.S. vessel. We now know that a number of "indicators" had been noted by the Intelligence Community in general and by State/INR and Navy Intelligence in particular. It appears that each of these intelligence organizations did apprise their policy and operational counterparts of this information but it did not filter down to the people concerned with issuing the notices to Mariners. In short, the word was promulgated but not to everyone who needed it. It is probably also true that Cambodian actions prior to the capture of the MAYAGUEZ were reported rather routinely, with no special interest or concern evident on the part of the Intelligence Community. As a result, the events involving the South Korean and Panamanian vessels were merely noted (and perhaps soon forgotten) by those officials who should have been sensitive to the "warning" responsibilities of their respective subordinate offices and branches.

3. The present system of developing and issuing notices to mariners works very well for the vast majority of cases which involve mere hazards to navigation. The Hydro Center - State - Navy triad was established to insure proper coordination in those instances when political or military issues are evident. It, too, works very well except in

"short fuse" situations or, in the case of the MAYAGUEZ, when the need for a warning is based upon classified or compartmented intelligence.

4. Some improvements are obviously needed to correct the occasional deficiencies in the present set up. But the thought comes to mind that since the system is basically sound, these changes should not be radical ones. Rather, some "fine tuning" adjustments are needed which would enhance our ability to cope with the rare but critical developments of the type which led to the MAYAGUEZ incident.

5. Since two of the three principal agencies (State and Navy) have organic intelligence entities, it would seem appropriate to encourage a closer liaison between these elements and the offices concerned with preparing and coordinating the warning broadcasts. I also believe that staff officer or analyst-level contact on a regular basis would, in the long run, prove to be the most efficient and responsive. That is to say, that although more senior officials in State and Navy would certainly want to be apprised of developments, they should not be burdened with the task of clearing the normal, day-to-day exchange of information. The maritime office which first receives information indicating a warning is required can then notify his points of contact in the other two agencies and initiate the coordination process. (All of the individuals involved have at least a TS clearance.)

6. The Hydrographic Center has made some progress in keeping abreast of events and developments around the world. Mr. Martin, the Chief of the Navigation Information Branch, has made arrangements

to the Hydrographic Center. Although this may prove adequate, I believe some thought should be given to providing the Navigation Information Branch with an FBIS circuit terminal of their own. If the Hydro Center needs actual intelligence information - and I'm not convinced they do, given the State and Navy participation--then DIA would seem the appropriate agency to provide that support.

7. In summary, I believe the most appropriate role for "intelligence" in this process is merely to insure

the timely flow of adequate information to those presently charged with coordinating and issuing the Special Warnings. It seems far less desirable (and perhaps infeasible) to attempt to siphon off a portion of the warning responsibility and assign it to some intelligence agency or special alert staff. Since all notices to mariners must be unclassified broadcasts (even if the imperative comes from sensitive sources) the non-intelligence players--and particularly the Hydrographic Center--seem to be the most appropriate sources for these notices.



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